Among the Fiction Writers

THE FORTUNES OF OLIVER HORN.

Nothing more enjoyable than this book of Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith has appeared in the flood of fiction that bids fair to make the year 1902 memorable in literary history. The story seems to be the culmination of the author's power, and here's wishing that same power may never wane. As a delineator of character, Mr. Smith need take a back seat in the presence of none of the modern novelists, as witness delightful characterizations of Richard Horn, the courtly Southern gentleman and inventor; his lovable, though truly aristocratic wife; his son, Oliver, hero of the tale and a veritable nineteenth century Chevalier Bayard; the three wonderful musicians, Nathan Gill, flutist, Max Unger, 'cellist, and Richard Horn, who was also a master violinist. To read of the evenings at the Horn mansion in Kennedy square, when tempting viands and rare vintages were served with ante-bellum negro deftness by old Malachi, and entrancing music was played by Horn, Gill and Unger, fairly makes one long to be in the midst of such a scene. There is not a dull line in all the five hundred and odd pages in the book. The thread of the story runs for a brief interval through the strife and pain and terror of the civil war, but the author passes over this unpleasant business with rare ease and consideration for the prejudices of both sides.

Mr. Smith cannot, however, forbear "touching up" the Southern people a trifle on some of their cherished notions. For instance, note the clever retort to Judge Bowman, made by Amos Cobb, a shrewd Vermont Yankee who had succeeded in gaining a foothold among these aristocrats below the Mason and Dixon line only through his marriage with one of their daughters. "You Northern men," remarked Judge Bowman, "I know, don't believe in blood. We do down here. This young man (referring to Oliver Horn) comes of a line of ancestors that have reflected great credit on our State for more than a hundred years, and he is bound to make his mark. His grandfather on his mother's side was our chief justice in 1810, and his great-grandfather was——"

"That's just what's the matter with most of you Southerners, judge," interrupted Cobb, his black eyes snapping. "You think more of blood than you do of brains. We rate a man on Northern soil by what he does himself, not what a bundle of bones in some family burying-ground did for him before he was born."

The joy that comes to a painter when success crowns his efforts is thus beautifully described in the book:

"Yes, there may be triumphs that come to men digging away on the dull highway of life—triumphs in business, in politics, in discovery, in law, medicine and science. To each and every profession and pursuit there must come, and does come, a time when a rush of uncontrollable feeling surges through the victor's soul, crowning long hours of work, but they are as dry ashes to a thirsty man compared to the boundless ecstasy a painter feels when, with a becaked palette, some half-dried tubes of color and a few worn-out, ragged brushes, he compels a six-by-nine canvas to glow with life and truth."

Here is another delicate bit of pastel, taken at random from many found in the book:

"A four hours' sketch handled as Watson has handled this," said Oliver, thoughtfully, "is better than four years' work on one of your Hudson rivery things. The sun doesn't stand still long enough for a man to get more than an expression of what he sees—that is, if he's after truth. The angle of shadow changes too quickly, and so do the reflected lights."

"What's the matter with the next day?" burst out Waller. "Can't you take up your sketch where you left off? You talk as if every great picture had to be painted before luncheon."

"But there is no next day," interrupted Watson. "I entirely agree with Horn." He had been listening to the discussion with silent interest. "No next day like the one on which you began your canvas. The sky is different—gray, blue or full of fleecy, sunny clouds. Your shadows are more purple, or blue or gray, depending on your sky overhead, and so are your reflections. If you go on and try to piece out your sketch you make an almanac out of it—not a portrait of what you saw. I can pick out the Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays on that kind of a sketch as soon as I see it. Nature is like a bird—if you want to surprise her you must let go both barrels when she rises; if you miss her at your first shot you will never have another chance—not at that particular bird."

There is a plentiful sprinkling of wit and fun and youthful spirits through the story, and one gets from it many fascinating glimpses of New York's artistic Bohemia, which, while perhaps not as lax as the one described by Murger, is not a whit less interesting. It is in this Bohemia, innocent almost as childhood and full as joyous, with its McFudd's brass band, frolics in Mrs. Teetum's attic and other spontaneous gayeties, that Oliver Horn meets Margaret Grant, about whom so much of the interest of the book clusters. But care must be taken in mentioning these things, lest more than a hint of the charming plot be allowed to escape, and thereby mar the reader's enjoyment. It is safe to say that Mr. Smith has never done anything better than "Oliver Horn." New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE MASTER OF APPLEBY.

There are novels without number dealing with events of the revolution, but their scenes are laid almost without exception either in New England—with an occasional excursion into New York and New Jersey—or in Virginia. The Carolinas played an important part in that momentous conflict between the British and the American colonists, but for some reason the writers of romance have passed that part by. It has remained for Francis Lynde to realize the possibilities in this field and to produce a work of fiction which has in it the atmosphere and spirit of that old time and yet is in no way an echo of revolutionary novels that have gone before. Roger Ireton, a leading character, who tells the story in the first person, has been something of a soldier of fortune in English and German armies, and returns to Carolina to find his father hanged as a rebel and his estate confiscated. The colony is at this time in possession of the British, and Ireton risks his freedom, if not his life, in coming into the region, the natural supposition being that he will espouse the cause for which his father died. He fulfills this expectation by joining the patriot militia under Rutherford, but not until he has had various lively adventures. He makes the acquaintance of Gilbert Stair, the man who has usurped his own place as "master of Appleby"—Appleby being the name of the estate that had belonged to Ireton's father. Stair is a scheming rascal, who endeavors to curry favor both with the British and the colonial leaders. He has a beautiful daughter, who, though a Tory in her sympathies, inherits none of her father's cowardly qualities. Ireton falls in love with her. So, also, does his friend and companion, Richard Jennifer, a patriot and owner of a neighboring estate. Another suitor for her hand is Sir Francis Fulconnet, a British officer with whom Ireton has once quarreled in England. With this fair lady as a center of interest, with battles and rumors of battles, with intrigues on the part of Tories, with traps laid for the capture of suspected rebels, with plots and counter-plots, daring risks and narrow escapes, there is constant excitement and occupation for all concerned. While Cornwallis and Tarleton, Tyhre and Rutherford figure here and there, the chief happenings have to do with the fortunes of the persons first mentioned, and a spirited tale they make. There are action and "go" in the story from the first page to the last—a sort of breathless interest. Its literary style is very good, and the book can be commended as one providing what most novel readers seek first, genuine entertainment. The Bowen-Merrill Company.

HENRY JAMES'S "THE WINGS OF THE DOVE."

The most recent product of Henry James's unique, subtle and serene power of psychological analysis and equable literary skill is a novel entitled "The Wings of the Dove." The "dove" is a young woman named Milly Theale, who in a succession cruelly rapid is deprived of the members of her family by death and is left alone with an immense fortune. Sad and timid she faces the world, hoping that it shall be given to her in some degree to enjoy life, doubtfully expectant and delicately susceptible. A Mrs. Susan Stringham, of Boston, after having been for a few weeks a guest at Milly's home in New York, is persuaded to accompany her on a journey to Europe, to which Milly looks for interests that shall stimulate and develop her vitality. Mrs. Stringham is trustworthy, comfortable and refined—the author of many stories of "New England life"—and as she and Milly start upon their adventures the prospect is easy and happy. After some traveling in southern Europe, during which the spectator is satisfied of Mrs. Stringham's lack of comprehension of Milly's trouble and the impossibility of her being a prop to the girl balancing on the edge of the dark abyss, the two go to London to visit a Mrs. Lowder, who was a schoolmate of Mrs. Stringham's on the continent in their youth.

Mrs. Lowder is a wealthy, healthy, large matron engaged in presiding over the affairs of a circle of idlers, principal among whom is her niece, Kate Croy, who is, with her aunt's disapproval, in love with a newspaper writer of no means, Merton Densher. Mrs. Lowder has refused to countenance this attraction for the reason that it is an essential part of her conception of beauty that her niece shall be mated to a man of importance. Therefore the young persons have had to give her to understand that they accede to her plan in order that they may meet, as friends, in Mrs. Lowder's house, which is Kate's home. Kate is handsome, strong and shrewd, and when Milly Theale comes into her view she appreciates the chance, for Densher and herself, contained in the American girl. She encourages Densher, who is not so clever, to cultivate the friendship of Milly, meaning that through her he may, in some future contingency, be enabled to reach a place where he can command Mrs. Lowder's respect as a matrimonial proposition. This policy Densher weakly, hesitatingly and in part ignorantly, pursues. Milly thinks that he is in love with Kate, but that Kate does not care for him, and as the evolution of circumstances, directed by Kate, persuades Milly that Densher has given Kate up, she permits herself to slip into love for him. Now Densher has arrived at the point where he clearly sees the plan: Milly is going to die before long, and if before her death he shall have been married to her he will have money and freedom with Kate. But it is all changed by a man who has been declined by Milly and who reveals to her the trachery of her friends; she "turns her face to the wall," leaving by bequest a large part of her fortune to Densher. Here is revenge, for Densher is inspired to rebellion and announces to Kate that he will refuse to accept the legacy and will make her his wife, or he will give her Milly's money and leave her forever. Kate's answer is a demand for his word of honor that he is not in love with Milly's memory. To this he says:

"Oh—her memory!"

"Ah"—she made a high gesture—"don't speak of it as if you couldn't be. I could, in your place, and your'e one for whom it will do. Her memory's your love. You want no other?"

He heard her out in stillness, watching her face, but not moving. Then he only said: "I'll marry you, mind you, in an hour."

"As we were?"

"As we were."

But she turned to the door and her headshake was now the end. "We shall never again be as we were!"

It is a tragedy of the selfish inutility of highly developed conventional life. The personages, with the exception of Milly, the feeble Mrs. Stringham and the awkward Densher, are all trying to "work" each other. Kate acts according to her training, urged on by a real love for Densher. That she does intensely love him she exhibits in giving herself to him when he demands this as a proof of her sincerity in the enterprise against Milly. Without this, he declares to her, he will throw up the whole business. So she secretly goes to him in his apartment on one of the days of the time they are actively engaged in the pursuit of Milly's fortune. Densher, having been reared in sounder conditions than Kate, is not able to stand the criminality of their proceeding against their helpless friend, and his feeling for coldly calculating Kate drops so far as to destroy their partnership. Yet they have had every advantage. Mrs. Lowder has helped them, because she wishes to put Densher off on Milly; Mrs. Stringham has helped them, because she, poor thing, sees Milly's attraction to Densher as a source of strength for the girl; the social system helps them, because it is compounded of short-sighted conveniences—but, implacably, nature settles it, almost (so plainly is the matter put), mathematically.

The wretched actuality is made out with entire plausibility by the author; he presents every connection between the incidents with marvelous accuracy of detail and cool, patient determination. There is absolutely no escape from the facts. The wonder of the work is that the author has been able to withdraw so far from the activities he describes, for he observes them from such a distance as to have an exact perspective. It is a "case" with which he is engaged, though he presents his report in the form of imagery instead of as a treatise. The author's principle, as directly expressed in his essays, is to commit no compromise with superficial and conventional rule, and from this viewpoint it is his practice to examine the affairs of men and deliberately to write of them. Dissatisfaction arises with his method from the fact that he is not positively a figure in his conception. In the novel here reviewed no character is competent, each is a blunderer, ideality is to be deduced and is not offered, and even in Milly no appeal to sympathy is made. The author seems entirely concerned with his reader's intellect and inspires it to take a position near his own detached place and view human incidents with his own aristocratic restraint. From end to end of the two volumes of the novel the description of scenes and incidents is fine and delightful, refreshing the mind and sharpening the wit in the perusal. The book is not one to be read in a hurry; it is a great and enduring work and demands the respect and thoughtfulness of the reader. The publishers are the Scribners. H. L.

FROM THE DRAWING BY HARRISON FISHER

"FRANCEZKA"

Miss Seawall's novel, "Francezka," from which the above illustration is taken, and which was recently reviewed in the Journal, is a story of the time of Louis XV, and in its pages are to be had glimpses of Voltaire and the famous actress Adrienne Leconvieur, as well as of a long list of interesting characters, historical and otherwise. They make a stately pageant as they pass. The tale is distinguished by a literary finish not common in current fiction and by an unusual situation leading up to the climax.

OUR LADY OF THE BEECHES.

This story, which ran during the summer as a serial in the Atlantic Monthly, is now published in book form by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., of Boston. The first appearance of the story in the Atlantic is an unquestionable guaranty of its literary excellence. It is original in form, cleverly written, and treats a delicate theme deftly and with the light touch of a feminine hand. The author, Baroness von Hulton, is an American woman who married a German nobleman, and who has seen a good deal of the world on both sides of the Atlantic. She casts the heroine of her story in the same mold. The rather odd title of "Our Lady of the Beeches" is derived from the fact that the story opens with a letter written by the heroine and dated "In a Beech Forest," somewhere in Europe. The letter is addressed to an unknown American, a scientist, and author of a metaphysical work by which the writer confesses herself to have been wonderfully impressed, and for whom she develops a remarkable affinity. Her first letter to the unknown begins, "My Dear Pessimist," and is written in a bantering, feminine style. She says: "I have read your book through three times; my copy has grown very shabby; the covers are stained—I drooped it in a brook; the margins are covered with pencil notes. In a word, I love the book." The first letter is one of Platonic admiration for the unknown author, but it invites a reply, and, without giving the writer's name, gives an address in Paris by which she may be reached. Of course, the unknown author answers the letter written in a beech wood, and there follows a correspondence, which grows more and more personal and less and less Platonic on both sides. The woman is twenty-nine years old and the wife of a man whom she respects but does not love. The party of the second part, the author of the book which has so interested her, is an American doctor, a bachelor, and forty years old. Both of them are too old for any but a serious flirtation, and one of them is handicapped by marriage. As the correspondence proceeds and grows warmer, they try to guess at each other's personalities, appearance and characters, and this draws them closer together. At first their letters are not signed at all, but later each signs her or his initials, and finally they learn each other's names. So the correspondence continues till quite an interest is worked up in the mind of the reader as to whether it will end in a divorce, an elopement, or what. The correspondence goes on about a year, when finally, through some rather awkward machinery, it comes to pass that the young wife comes to America and meets her unknown correspondent. She seems rather to seek the meeting, perhaps to gratify a woman's curiosity. Some sentimental passages follow, with some warm declarations of love on one side and confessions on the other, and then they go apart. There is no elopement or divorce. The ending of the story is suggestive of a storm that blows over. The correspondence between the two principals is clever and witty, the woman's letters being the better of the two, as a bright woman's letters always are better than those of a man; but beyond this the story is somewhat lacking in body. The plot, in so far as there is any, drifts, and all the characters except the two principals seem to be supernumeraries. The heroine of the story impresses one as clever but rather frivolous. To many readers the theme will be found disagreeable, but the story will please readers who take laxer views of what a woman's conduct should be, and all who read it must admit that the material is cleverly handled.

THE INEVITABLE.

Roger Gordon, an American youth, at the beginning of a splendid musical career, finds the mystery and obscurity surrounding his birth to resolve themselves into the taint of negro blood. The knowledge is overwhelming. Rather than bring disgrace upon future generations, he renounces marriage with a beautiful English girl, for whom, when they were both mere children, he had conceived a reciprocated and undying passion. He also abandons his career and cuts himself off from temptation by retiring to Liberia. The subject is disagreeable, but the extreme naivete of the author renders "The Inevitable" diverting rather than tragic. The story opens somewhat hysterically with a mob episode in Missouri. Even in Missouri, where the writer is evidently at home, the details of the life are handled more or less vaguely. The scene shifts thence to an unreal London, and later to an even more unreal and shadowy New York. In fact, inexperience and lack of knowledge at first hand are written large throughout the book. The dialogue is crude and dull in the extreme, and although it is a novel of manners and morals, it makes little headway in the development of either. The most clearly-drawn personality is perhaps that of Colossus, but he is, unfortunately, something quite aside and accidental. In Liberia as "The Inevitable" the author fails to mark finality. A great musical composer, of established reputation, might with the sudden curse of race upon him seek, on impulse, to bury his grief and sorrow in the wilds of an African colony, but surely he would think better of it in time and would hasten to retrieve the error. In spite of its rawness and ultra romantic point of view, the story moves along with some spirit. There is a certain freedom of emotional expression which holds the attention and suggests a real, although unmatured, gift on the part of the author, Philip Verrill Mighels. The J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE.

This much-talked-of story by "Mary Adams" has been already commented on in the Journal's editorial page, but it may be added here that those who read it when it was running as a serial in the Century Magazine will be even more forcibly impressed with its hysterical quality on reading in the more connected book form. The "confessions" are those of a woman whose only conception of love is one involving the selfish absorption of the loved one's time and attention; it is the love which demands from its object constant expression; it is a love entirely lacking in the spiritual quality. Even at the last, when the wandering husband returns and the wife has learned to subdue her emotions somewhat and has discovered that life can be lived even though "Dana" is a broken reed—even then her thoughts are of herself and her own feelings. She poses before herself. The character of the wife as it is drawn in the book fairly well represents a class of nervous, ill-balanced, self-conscious women, but fortunately it is not typical of the vast majority else marriage would indeed be a failure. There is perhaps a moral in the "confessions," but it is a story to irritate a healthy-minded reader. The Century Company, New York.

A SONG OF A SINGLE NOTE.

Again Mrs. Amelia E. Barr has written a story of New York during the revolution. She says specifically that this is a love story, not a tale of war, and the reader will add that it is a truly charming one. Her "Bow of Orange Ribbon" is a novel not to be excelled among its kind. As in that story, the heroine of this one loves and is loved by a young English nobleman, who is in New York with General Clinton during the time of the British occupation. Maria Semple is a beauty and more or less of a coquette, flaunting her pretty clothes and coquettish wiles alike on American, Englishman and Scotchman. And thereby hangs the tale. A note thrown by the American to her is captured by the Scotchman, who thinks he smells a traitor, and brings all pretty Maria's little flirtations about her ears in a sad state of wreck; from this the gallant Englishman, Lord Medway, offers to disentangle her, provided she will marry him, which she does. The story is too attractive to spoil by a premature telling, and it is heartily recommended (together with the two others of the series, "A Bow of Orange Ribbon" and "The Maid of Maiden Lane," as a good readable, romantic love story. Published by Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.

THE INSANE ROOT.

"The Insane Root" is a story written by Mrs. Campbell Praed, and published by the Funk & Wagnalls Company. In this romance Mrs. Praed has adopted the Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde idea of a dual existence and has portrayed with considerable strength the conflict between the two widely differing natures of the hero. The plot is based on the eastern legend of the power of the mandrake root, which enables its possessor to quit his own body and take possession of that of another man's. If one considers the novel as a story, the machinery of magic by which the situation is obtained is strained and all the incidents overdrawn. On the other hand, considered as an allegory of life, the struggle is limited and insufficient, confined to but one phase of the man's character. The style is intense and holds the reader's attention. Some of the scenes, especially those in Algeria, rise above the book's level, and are vivid and dramatic. The treatment of the theme suggests Bulwer's "Strange Story" in its weirdness, but differs from it in the author's evident serious allegorical purpose. Bulwer and Stevenson could adequately treat mysterious themes, but in reading "The Insane Root" the reader feels that the author has attempted to deal with a subject beyond her powers.

THE BANNER OF BLUE.

Mr. S. R. Crockett, the well-known writer of Scottish stories, among which "The Stickit Minister" probably holds first place, though "The Black Douglas," "The Firebrand" and others are equally well known, has just written a new novel which McClure, Phillips & Co. publish. "The Banner of Blue" has been truly called a modern version of the story of the Prodigal Son, with the important omission of envy and soreness on the part of the stay-at-home brother, who, on the contrary, willingly gives his all to pay the debts of the elder brother, doing his best to uphold the honor of the family, which the unjust father considers to be altogether centered in his heir, while his injustice to his younger son is little short of damnable. The Lord of Gower had two sons, Rupert and John. Upon the elder he lavished every atom of his affection and all of his money, to the utter undoing of this fascinating, ungrateful, handsome scamp, while the younger son, John, by no means behind his brother in looks, and far ahead of him in mind and morals, is made a sacrifice to save Rupert. Even his patrimony, left in his father's trust since his mother's death, is secretly thrown as a sop to satisfy the importunate demands of creditors. Against the somber religious background of the time of the split between church and state in the early part of the last century, when the Dissenters took away apart, suffering hardly less for their belief and convictions than did the martyrs of the Reformation—amid this dark setting of the disruption period Mr. Crockett paints the love stories of Kate and Fairlie Glendenning in a masterly way. These two girls so unlike, the elder apparently so firm and stable, the younger so happily, lightsomely gay, change places when love enters their lives, Fairlie then becoming a very rock of refuge and help to the unfortunate older girl, who seems deprived of all will-power after Rupert has stolen her heart. Fairlie, on the other hand, is uplifted and glorified by her love for John, whose sufferings for the sake of his little flock of followers, after he has declared his beliefs and convictions to be with the new faction, and has given up the manse and the kirk of his first pastorate, wring her heart. The description of the services held by John Glendinning, first in an old gravel pit, forced from there to an unused quarry, and finally driven by his relentless father (representative of state against the new sect) to the very beach itself, gives the reader some idea to what straits this people were pushed to find a place to worship God according to their consciences. There is a vividness of personality, a reality, in Mr. Crockett's characterizations not often to be found in stories more or less cumbered with a subtle sense of humor which pleasantly lightens the somber bigotry of such rock-bound characters as the almost fanatical father of the girls, David Glendinning, and the arrogant pride of his cousin, Lord of Gower.

ON FORTUNE'S ROAD.

Here is another of those books by ex-newspaper writers, with which the fiction output of 1902 so freely abounds, and its merit is such that the reader does not need to be told that it is not Mr. Payne's first work. Two other books bearing the name of Will Payne as author have already appeared, "The Story of Eva" and "The Money Captain." From the titles and subject-matter of "The Money Captain" and this latest book "On Fortune's Road," one might conclude that the author had served an apprenticeship as financial reporter or editor of a modern newspaper. This is probably true, and, if so, Mr. Payne is to be congratulated on possession of a literary style more interesting than that usually exhibited in newspaper accounts of financial movements. His latest book is a collection of short stories, dealing with various phases of financial life in Chicago. Each story is provided with a good plot, a set of well-executed character sketches and a fine climax, clothed and ornamented with excellent English. "In the Panic" gives an admirable picture of the strenuous life about a savings banks when the financial atmosphere is heavily clouded. "A Day in Wheat" takes the reader into the midst of the vortex of the trading room where fortunes literally strike fire in the violence of their passage to and fro from "shorts" to "longs" or vice versa. What it means to a community to see the menace of an approaching trust, reaching greedily to absorb its little all-nourishing industry, is vividly described in "The Plant at High Grove." "The Chairman's Politics" cleverly intermingles municipal and State political intrigue with the soulless stratagems of the stock market, and, true to life, leaves the bad man unwhipt of justice. The author rises to his best height in the last story, "The End of the Deal." There are two other excellent stories in the collection, "The Salt Crowd's Trade" and "The Lame Boy," the latter, perhaps, being more of a bit of striking character drawing than story. All in all, "On Fortune's Road" is of a grade of excellence to make one look forward to the author's next work. McClurg & Co., Chicago.

A STORY BY CONRAD.

Those who have read Joseph Conrad's "Lord Jim," "Children of the Sea," or that wonderful short story, "Youth," will naturally look for another tale of the sea when they hear of a new book by this author. Most assuredly "Typhoon," his latest tale, is of that order. It is a story of 200 pages and all of them are required in which to tell of a storm in the South seas, a tremendous storm in which the winds and waters did their worst for three days to Captain MacWhirr's seaworthy steamship, the Nan-Shan, but failed to take it to the bottom. It was no skill of the simple-minded, ill-equipped captain that saved it, but in the end he got great credit. Also his method of treating the Chinamen on board was not that of a wise man, but it turned out to be a successful way. There is much in the tale that is too technical for the unnautical person to comprehend, but the rush and sweep and terror of the gale are portrayed there with a vividness that no one can miss, and the reader turns the pages with a sensation of breathlessness. Surely Mr. Conrad knows the sea in all its moods and knows well how to write of it. "Typhoon" is a thrilling tale. G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers.

THE HOLE IN THE WALL.

Arthur Morrison has written several interesting stories of the slums of London. His "Tales of Mean Streets" and "A Child of the Jago" shows he has studied closely the people who live by hook or crook in those sections of the great metropolis which are shunned by respectable citizens. Mr. Morrison's latest book, "The Hole in the Wall," is of the same character as his earlier works. All the emotions and passions, good and bad, that influence man and woman are portrayed, but the scene of the narrative is such that the bad predominates. The two principal characters are Grandfather Nat Kemp and his nephew Stephen. Grandfather Nat is the keeper of a "fence," whose "Hole in the Wall"—a groggery—is a "blind" for his other busi-